




STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
P.O. BOX 41100 • Olympia, Washington 98504-1100

December 16, 2015

TO: All Superintendents

FROM: 
Stephen Sinclair, Assistant Secretary – Prisons Division

SUBJECT: Meals During Visiting

The Department of Corrections is committed to helping offenders develop and maintain positive family relationships, which we know is a major contributing factor to their success when they release. For offenders who may never release, their connection to family is an essential element of hope and moving forward. As a part of this effort we strive to create visiting environments that are positive and allow for the best family and friend connections we can within a safe and secure environment. In order to achieve these we regularly engage local and statewide family councils to improve our efforts and gain insights about how to make the experience better. At a recent statewide family council meeting, attended by Secretary Dan Pacholke and others, a simple request was made. The council asked that we provide meals for offenders attending visiting. We agree offenders should not have to choose between visiting and receiving a meal.

Some facilities do have practices in place that allow those offenders who want a meal to receive one while remaining in the visiting room. These facilities should continue this practice, as long they meet the following standard: Offenders will receive, at a minimum, a Correctional Industries boxed lunch for each meal period during their visit. While this is the minimum standard, all facilities are encouraged to provide a warm meal when possible. The meals being provided are intended for the offender and are not intended for the friends and family who may be visiting. However, it is not a violation for the offender to share the meal with friends and family.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and all of your efforts to make your visiting rooms full of hope.

SS:cog

cc: Dan Pacholke, Secretary
Jody Becker-Green, Deputy Secretary
Robert Herzog, Deputy Director, Command A
Scott Russell, Deputy Director, Command B